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The Student and the Future

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICE AND THE PACIFIC

By R. I. JARDINE

IN many countries in the world today students are playing an extremely important part in politics, and nowhere is this more marked than in the countries bordering on the Pacific Ocean. The recent course of events in South America bears witness to this in a most striking degree. China is another country which immediately springs to mind when one considers this phenomenon. If the problems confronting these countries are to be solved, it is very largely the present students who will be in a position in after years to help in the solution. If they can be brought together to discuss things, it is a good augury for the future. It is to this end that International Student Service is working with students in these countries; but first it is necessary to show how this organisation came to take up this particular piece of work.

In 1920 European Student Relief of the World's Student Christian Federation was founded at Vienna to meet the sudden and appalling crisis which had befallen the students of Central and Eastern Europe. An appeal was issued to students all over the world, which was answered in a striking manner. Not merely in Europe and the United States of America, but in South America and all the countries bordering on the Pacific, the appeal was generously answered by the student community. From the very beginning European Student Relief did not confine itself solely to the relief of the destitute in material things but, recognising the supreme importance to any civilisation of the student community, it sought to create a feeling of international student solidarity and a consciousness that new conceptions and fresh ideals were vitally necessary to the universities to enable them to play a worthy part in the quickly changing drama of international affairs. So, as the immediate material crisis of the students became less acute, European Student Relief changed into International Student Service, an independent body working in close collaboration with other international organisations.

International Student Service therefore carried on the relations with the Pacific countries already established by

European Student Relief. There was, however, not a great deal of value to be gained from a simple relation of donor and recipient. In the case of the European countries and also of the United States of America, it was possible to gain a real educational value from the giving of subscriptions for relief. It was possible to show the students of these countries that they were not merely taking part in a fine piece of charitable work, but that they were in very truth saving their own heritage of culture from irreparable ruin. Had the student community in Central Europe collapsed as a result of its privations, all the cultures which have been founded on a European basis would have suffered damages which it is not easy to compute. Accordingly, in Europe and the United States, the raising of money for student relief was by no means simply the giving of alms, but a really magnificent contribution to international education and the cause of peace.

IT was different in the case of the Pacific countries, separated as they are by so many thousands of miles from the countries they were helping. It is true that they probably know more about Europe than Europe knows about them, but there could not be the same educative value in the raising of money when they were not merely far apart physically, but in many cases culturally as well, from the objects of their help. As a demonstration of friendliness among students it was a noble act, but an isolated one without any very apparent permanent value.

It might be held that, as there exists grave need amongst students in certain Pacific countries as well, it would be a partial solution of the problem to organise in Europe reciprocal relief schemes for the East. But that merely means more charity, and is open to the same objection that it is difficult to invest it with permanent educative value. Undoubtedly it is all to the good that different sections of the world should combine together to help other parts of the world which happen to be in a less fortunate position. Indeed, International Student Service has projects in China, for instance, for which it is in process of raising money. Such work must go on so long as there are needs to be met, but International Student Service has certain ideals in view for the universities which go far beyond the mere relief of the material needs of the student community.

WITH this in mind we consulted with a group of students from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and California, who had been active in our work. It was pointed out that we now had relations with the Pacific countries, but that they were not very satisfactory from the point of view of our larger aims. Obviously something more had to be done. The question was, "What?"

In considering this question the following points were brought out: In European universities there are to be found representatives of all the countries bordering on the Pacific. These representatives very seldom have opportunities of meeting each other in their home areas and, when they come abroad to study (for the most part in Britain, France, Germany or Holland), they find it very difficult to make effective contacts with the students of these European countries. In some cases, notably of students from the British Dominions and the United States, or South Americans who go to Latin Europe to study, these overseas students are proceeding along the paths of their traditional cultures. But those who come from Oriental lands are plunged at once into a new environment and tradition, and so faced with all the difficult problems to which that process gives rise. Besides those purely personal difficulties which have to be faced if international understanding is to prevail, there are a large number of problems of the Pacific area with which Europe is most intimately connected. There are questions of Empire (with which the United States is also concerned through her possessions in the Philippines), with all their complicating psychological factors of racial subjection and new national self-consciousness. The Singapore base, extraterritoriality, the Manchurian railways, all have their European significance, and form a connecting link, of not too happy augury, between the Pacific area and Europe.

It would, so it seemed, in view of all these considerations, be an excellent thing for International Student Service to seize the opportunity afforded by the presence in Europe of students from the various Pacific countries, and bring those students together to discuss their mutual problems along with European students from the host countries of Britain, Germany, France and Holland. Accordingly, as a first step, a conference of Pacific students studying in Europe and their European student colleagues was called at Nyon, in Switzerland, in April, 1930.

Most of the countries around the Pacific were represented, as well as three of the South American Republics. The Chairman of the conference was Dr. S. K. Datta of India, who had just returned from a long tour in the East in the course of which he had attended the Kyoto Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations as a member of the British group. The Nyon conference was divided into three sections. The first dealt with some problems of the Pacific, on which the Chairman and various officials of the League of Nations and the International Labour Organisation spoke. The second section dealt with student affairs and their responsibilities and the work of International Student Service. The third section was concerned with student life in the various Pacific countries, in the consideration of which students themselves tried to explain the characteristics of student life in their homelands. It was entirely a study conference for the purpose of giving and receiving information. It was not political and did not pass any resolutions nor come to any decisions except one: to hold a similar conference in 1932.

The question was raised at the conference: Are there distinct Pacific problems and can one consider the Pacific area as an entity? The increasing interdependence of the Asiatic group was pointed out, and the rapidly increasing volume of transpacific trade. Today India, China and Japan, in spite of tariff barriers, are tending more and more to become an economic unity. Although, theoretically, the Pacific basin might seem to be merely a geographical term, in actual practice the countries concerned are finding more and more surely that they have common anxieties and common problems which can only be solved by coöperation amongst themselves. In this connection it is interesting to note that at the Nyon Conference some of the South American countries were represented. These countries are usually regarded as being orientated towards Europe rather than to the Pacific, but one has to remember that South America has a long Pacific coast line, that Japanese are settling in Brazil, and that inevitably in the search for new markets South America cannot afford to neglect the potentialities of China and the East. It may be mentioned in passing that at Nyon a great deal of interest was manifested in the Institute of Pacific Relations, and that the hope was expressed that student groups interested in Pacific affairs might make con-

tact with Institute national councils and make use of the knowledge and information afforded thereby.

BUT the mere holding of a conference does not do very much except arouse an interest which may quickly die away if it is not kept stimulated by some means or other. International Student Service intends, therefore, to follow up this work. This must be done through the people who were at the conference, for we have no organisation in the several countries concerned, but work through personal contacts and in collaboration with already existing groups. Of these latter there are probably enough already and we have no intention of setting up others. What we wish to do is to integrate the Pacific countries in a permanent fashion into our general work. This means more than merely encouraging general study, which is good but does not go far enough. It means attacking definitely various concrete problems, and this has been planned under four heads.

1. *China*

It is intended to hold a Chinese-European Conference in July, 1931. This will be composed of Chinese students studying in European countries and European students in those countries. One section will deal with the problems of the Chinese students abroad, students in Britain, France, Germany and the U. S. A. speaking on their experiences. The second section will be concerned with the student self-help and coöperative movements in Europe, and with cultural coöperation of students and other classes of the community. There will also be more general consideration of the part which students are playing in politics, economics and culture in the New China.

International Student Service is also raising a sum of \$25,000, of which \$2,500 has already been secured, for the creation in Nanking of a student self-help centre. A very strong Chinese committee has been set up and it is hoped by this means to translate into Chinese terms the possibilities of "self-help" and various coöperative enterprises which will aid in overcoming some of the tremendous difficulties which Chinese students are facing at the present time.

2. *University Reform*

The Universities, like every other aspect of life, have to take their places in the scheme of change. Many of the dif-

difficulties which students are experiencing arise out of the systems themselves. It is impossible to meet their needs by extracurricular activities. The task of equipping the student for modern life is growing so complex that some overhauling of the educational machinery is inevitable. Leading educationists of various countries are therefore preparing a symposium for International Student Service. In such a work the interesting experiments being carried out in the universities of the Far East and South America are obviously of great importance.

3. Contacts With European Groups

The question of our own relations with European groups is being pursued. In Holland there are various groups interested in the problems of their Eastern Empire, and there is also a large group of Indonesian students present there. Holland may be said to be one of the imperial countries most alive to its imperial problems. We hope through the Dutch members of the Nyon Conference and through other personal contacts to keep in touch with developments in Holland, and to keep the Dutch groups informed of what is happening in similar groups in other countries. In France we are in touch with the *Fédération Universitaire Internationale*, and with various individuals who are keenly interested in these problems. We are also in touch with the French Indo-Chinese students through a representative at our conference. In Britain there is the British Universities League-of-Nations Union with its Dominion branches, and there is also the Student Christian Movement and its work among foreign students. With both of these movements we are in close relation. In Germany there is the *Deutsche Akademische Auslandsstelle*, which is keenly interested in the study and understanding of foreign cultures and in introducing foreign students to the culture of Germany, an organisation with which we have many contacts.

4. Pan-American Conference

It was suggested at the Nyon Conference by an American delegate that it would be a good thing to hold a Pan-American Conference, to which the South American delegates cordially assented. We are in consultation with our North American Committee about this and hope that this project may be realised.

IN addition to all these definite projects there are the more intimate problems of the foreign student to be considered. How is it possible to bring him into really close contact with the social life of the country in which he is studying? How is it possible to improve his relations with the students of the country so that he may not feel lonely and aloof from the life about him? How is it possible to introduce the student of the host country to the national culture of his student guests and to help him realise the contribution which those guests are making to civilisation? More difficult still, where the foreign student comes from a dependency, how are we to overcome racial prejudice? How are we to overcome the inferiority complex and the resentments and misunderstandings which arise therefrom? The first condition is obviously that there should be in the Empire-possessing country a group which is anxious to coöperate. It is of little use entering this field unless one is assured of such support. It is noteworthy, in this connection, that students everywhere are showing that they are keenly alive to problems of this sort and are most anxious to find some solution. In every country student opinion, once it is aroused, is much in advance of ordinary public opinion.

It will be seen that the task of International Student Service is no easy one. We shall feel that our endeavors are justified if we can make some real contribution towards international understanding. More than that, however, we hope by thus extending our work to the Pacific, to help students to understand that university education, however much it may differ in different countries, should seek its ultimate inspiration not in the differences but in the unity of mankind.